

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5944

As of January 29, 2014

Title: An act relating to special permits and signage for certain overheight or overwidth vehicle loads.

Brief Description: Concerning special permits and signage for certain overheight or overwidth vehicle loads.

Sponsors: Senator Baumgartner.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/30/14.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Kim Johnson (786-7472)

Background: Generally, the following size limitations reflect the maximum height and width of a vehicle or load that may be moved over the public highways in Washington without a special permit: vehicle or load height of 14 feet; and vehicle or load width of eight and one-half feet. The Department of Transportation (WSDOT) issues permits for the movement of over-legal loads on the state highways. In order to move a load exceeding the maximum dimensions in state law, a person must apply for an over-legal load permit. WSDOT issued approximately 135,000 over-legal load permits last year, nearly 60,000 of which addressed an over-height load. Local jurisdictions issue over-legal load permits for the movement of loads over public highways under the local jurisdiction's control.

Currently, WSDOT does not verify whether the height or width of the load a permit applicant specifies exceeds the height or width of any bridge or structure along the route proposed by the applicant.

The Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices requires that bridges or structures that cross over a roadway be posted with a low clearance sign if the bridge or structure is less than 12 inches above the statutory maximum vehicle height, or 15 inches above the statutory maximum vehicle height in areas of the country that experience frost action. WSDOT currently posts vertical clearance signs if the height of the bridge over the traveling lanes is less than 15 feet 3 inches.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: WSDOT and local governments are prohibited from issuing an over-legal load permit for a vehicle moving a load that exceeds the actual minimum clearance height or width of a bridge on the proposed route.

All structures over or across any public highway that provide less than 16 feet of clearance from the roadway must be signed with a low clearance sign indicating the height of the structure.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.